



# Conservatives Abroad

## Annual Conference 2015

October 8th, 2015

9AM - 5PM



Rt. Hon. David Cameron MP



October 2015

### Conservatives Abroad Conference 2015

I am delighted to have the opportunity to welcome you to the 2015 Conservatives Abroad Conference. This is now the fifth Conference to be held in London, and it is particularly pleasing that so many Conservative delegates from across the world have made the trip once again.

It is my great privilege to welcome every one of you to today's conference, under the first majority Conservative Government for nearly twenty years. Clearly, the General Election result was a fantastic one for our party, but most importantly, for our country. The British public have put their faith in our party to form a majority Conservative Government. It is now our responsibility to build on all we have achieved over the past five years and deliver our Manifesto commitments. Throughout it all, we must continue to show how we are a government that is on the side of working people who do the right thing; that spreads hope and opportunity to the most disadvantaged; and that brings our country together.

We can be proud that, only a few months in, we are already delivering so much. We promised security at every stage of people's lives: more free childcare, better schools and training, more apprenticeships, more jobs, more homes people can afford to buy, more of your own money to spend as you choose, and more dignity and security in retirement. All of those things we said we would do – and we are well on the way to achieving them.

We also promised to scrap the rule that bars British citizens who have lived abroad for more than 15 years from voting. The Votes for Life Bill, which was announced as part of the Queen's Speech package of legislation, will ensure that civic rights are protected; guaranteeing British citizens living abroad the right to vote for life. I am most encouraged to continue to have the support of Conservatives Abroad as this important Bill makes its way through Parliament.

We simply could not have done this without the help and support of our Members across the world. So a massive 'thank you' for everything that you have done and continue to do for our party and our country.

While there is a great deal of hard work ahead, I hope at today's conference you are able to take some time to reflect on all that has been achieved these past months – I remain incredibly grateful for everything Conservatives Abroad did to help make this possible.

This comes with my utmost thanks and my very best wishes for an enjoyable and successful annual Conference.

## Welcome from the Party Chairman

I am delighted to welcome Conservative delegates from across the world to the fifth Conservatives Abroad Conference in London.

As a Party, we should be proud of our achievements over the last five years. Labour left our economy in chaos in 2010 and we worked hard to clean up their mess. We cut the deficit by a half, gave an income tax cut to over 27 million people and capped benefits to reward work. Businesses created nearly two million more jobs and there are one million more pupils in good and outstanding schools.

The job we started is not yet finished. We still have much to do to secure a better future for Britain and earlier this year, the British people gave us a mandate to implement our Conservative vision for the country's future.



For the first time in almost two decades, we have a Conservative Prime Minister at the Cabinet table, surrounded solely by Conservative Ministers. This is no small achievement, and I wish to take this opportunity to thank our supporters abroad for their all their hard work and support in the General Election campaign.

We believe that if you're a British citizen for life, no matter where you live, you should have a vote for life too. In our General Election Manifesto, we committed to scrapping the rule that bars British citizens who have lived abroad for more than 15 years from voting, and I am delighted that the Government plans to introduce a Bill in this Parliament to honour this commitment.

Following our success in May, we cannot afford to be complacent. Now is the time to look to the future and lay the foundations for victory in 2020. I am very grateful to our supporters abroad for everything they do for our Party, and I look forward to working closely with Conservatives Abroad as we face the challenges of the coming years.

Thank you, once again, for your outstanding support. I wish you all a very enjoyable and successful annual Conference.

## Conservatives Abroad Chairman's Annual Report Heather Harper



What an amazing year of success for Conservatives Abroad. In my Report to last year's Conservatives Abroad Annual Conference I set out a clear programme, strongly focussed on helping our Party to win the 2015 election.

I explained how we had been tasked by the Party Chairman to raise the number of British expats registered to vote in the General Election from 26,000 in 2010. Our Conference discussed and agreed an innovative "Think of Three" viral social media campaign as the key driver for increasing registration, which the Prime Minister subsequently launched for us last December.

I am delighted to report that in May 2015, as a result of everyone's hard work, the number of overseas electors on the electoral register was 105,845, four times more than previously registered and smashing the target set by the Party Chairman.

Importantly, we can actually see how our efforts made a real contribution to the Conservative Party's election victory. In at least two seats (Croydon Central and Derby North) the number of (mainly Conservative voting) overseas votes was significantly more than the Conservative MP's winning majority, thus making the difference to gaining those seats.

**Croydon Central - Gavin Barwell MP maj. 165 (Overseas Voters 213)**

**Derby North - Amanda Solloway MP maj. 41 (Overseas Voters 78)**

Throughout the year, Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP has championed the mission of Conservatives Abroad. I have met with him on a regular basis benefiting from his valued support and parliamentary expertise with assistance from Jeremy Lilley and Judith Betterton.

Conservative Abroad have liaised with other non-political expat organisations particularly in France and Spain on a number of expatriate issues which has been very productive and Sir Roger Gale MP is championing some of these causes on our behalf.



I have also had the great pleasure to work alongside Harry Shindler MBE throughout this year in our mutual quest for obtaining Votes for Life by scrapping the '15 year rule'.

In my report this year I look back on some of our successful activities in that election year, talk about the rewards that our hard work has won us, and look at some of the challenges ahead for us, both in the short and long term.

### Our Key Activities in 2014-2015

The Conservatives Abroad General Election Campaign kicked off last October at the Party Conference in Birmingham at our fringe meeting How Expats could help you win in 2015 with the Rt. Hon Liam Fox MP. This brain storming meeting was of much value to our campaigning. The CA Annual Conference at CCHQ followed, with ministers, MPs, MEPs, party campaign and election chiefs addressing our delegates from around the world. Later at the Conservatives Abroad annual Carlton dinner we were honoured with the Rt Hon Alistair Burt MP as our guest speaker.

Our core "Think of Three" overseas registration campaign was launched in December with hundreds of thousands of emails being sent out from the party, MPs, Peers, candidates and Conservative groups urging people to "Think of Three" people they knew who lived abroad and forward to them the email which contained details of how to register online. Our campaign pointed to [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) so we worked with the Electoral Commission in partnership with others to increase the numbers. I am very grateful to Graham Brady MP for the opportunity to address the 1922 committee to inform how the "Think of Three" campaign could increase candidates' electoral chances in the forthcoming election. We also used Facebook, twitter and other social media to push the "Think of Three" message to as many people as possible.

The results were quite outstanding and the number of registered overseas voters in 2015 was many times more than has ever previously been achieved.

We also gave direct support to six key 40/40 marginal seats that Conservatives Abroad had decided to adopt. We donated £2,000 to each to help with their election materials and expenses and many of us actively canvassed in these seats. Having run a hard campaign we were disappointed that our candidate for Walsall North, Douglas Hansen-Luke was not successful this time.

Our branches and representatives around the world played their part in fund raising, with special thanks to David Rollston-Smith and SW France members and Jeremy Stubbs and British Conservatives in Paris for generous contributions. Branch members helped in registering overseas voters and organised a great range of election events including debate in Paris, a hustings in Indonesia, parties in Bahrain, Sydney, France, Spain and many other election night parties.

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### Working with a majority Conservative government

Our outright victory on May 7th means that the Government can now fulfil its manifesto commitment to allow all expats to vote, no matter how long they have lived abroad. Removing the arbitrary "15 year rule" will enfranchise around two million Britons and allow them to exercise their democratic right to vote in UK general elections.

We were delighted that the Votes for Life Bill featured in the first Queen's Speech of the new Parliament. The Bill will also include measures to enhance overseas registration and improve the voting system for Britons living abroad.

Our victory also allows for the promised European Referendum. Conservatives Abroad is working with the Government to ensure that the voices of British expats, particularly those living in Europe, are heard during the campaign and the vote.

### Preparing for 2020

We want to build on our success in 2015. This means doing even better in 2020. And that means starting now.

Removing the 15 year rule will dramatically increase the number of eligible voters for 2020. And the focus of the European Referendum should be a powerful way of engaging with overseas voters. Just as we saw thousands more people motivated to vote in the Scottish Referendum, so we must take advantage of the European vote to encourage many more expats to register and stay registered for 2020.

And it means engaging more with our members to make best use of everyone's expertise, experience and enthusiasm to spread the word abroad and work towards our next Conservative election victory.



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And it means engaging more with our members to make best use of everyone's expertise, experience and enthusiasm to spread the word abroad and work towards our next Conservative election victory. This means working with the Government and Electoral Commission to ensure that people can register and vote easily. It means expanding and invigorating our brilliant branches and representatives around the world. It means developing and improving our communications network through our website, Facebook pages and email databases.

And it means engaging more with our members to make best use of everyone's expertise, experience and enthusiasm to spread the word abroad and work towards our next Conservative election victory.



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### **A BIG THANK YOU**

And finally I want to give a big thank you to everyone whose effort has helped us achieve not only our Agenda from last year but other uncharted tasks. In particular I have to single out one person who has been significant in our Team, our wonderful campaign director Paul Barnes. Telephones were practically grafted to our ears between France and the UK going over strategy, focus points, numbers, media etc. but every time we faced a hurdle or disappointment in strategy or result, he was quickly able to justify how we 'get over it' and 'get on with it' in his true professional manner. And another big thank you to Carlos Kytka for once again producing this excellent Conference Programme for us.

I also thank Christopher Chantry OBE for handling the many frustrations of would be overseas electors in their quest to get registered. And of course our membership administrator, Philip Dumville for the mammoth task of sorting out lists and lists which isn't that simple when you don't have one single constituency. Peter Freeman we thank for holding our purse strings and congratulate him on his promotion election to Westminster council and welcome Douglas Hansen-Luke as his successor, Rula Al Adasani for unstinting support and Pippa Broom and her Team in the International office. Tristan Feunteun for canvassing at CCHQ for the General Election and most recently recently Jonathan Lytle and David Tennant (not the doctor) have done much needed administration work.

There are the many unsung people all over the world who campaigned for us by sending out "Think of Three" to their friends and of course all the families who were somewhat neglected in the weeks leading up to May 2015.

So with a very positive outlook and the first Conservative majority government in 20 years let's work to increase our 'worldwide constituency' and grow the Conservative majority again in 2020.

## Conference Agenda

### Conservatives Abroad Annual Conference

CCHQ, Thursday 8th October 2015

#### PREPARING TO WIN IN 2020

9:30 Introduction- Heather Harper – Chairman of Conservatives Abroad

9:35 Welcome from Conservative Party Chairman – Lord Feldman

9:45 – 11:15 VOTES FOR LIFE THE BILL- keynote speakers John Penrose MP, Minister for Constitutional Reform with Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP and Lord Lexden

- How the Government will deliver its promise to give votes for life to British overseas voters
- Q&As

11:15 – 11:45 Coffee

11.45-12.45 THE VOTING SYSTEM – Electoral Commission. Director of Communications Alex Robertson

- Working together to maximize overseas registration and voting
- Q&As

12:45-14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 15:00 THE EUROPEAN UNION – Sir Bill Cash MP, Chairman, House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee

- What the referendum will mean for Britons living abroad
- Q&As

## Conference Agenda

15:00 – 15:45 THE ROAD TO 2020 WITH OVERSEAS CONSERVATIVES – Darren Mott, Director of Campaigns, Colin Bloom, Director of Outreach, Conservative Party

- Five years to prepare for victory in 2020. What we can do to maximize the overseas vote in 2020?
- Q&As

15:45 – 16:15 Tea and coffee break

16:15 – 16:55 HOW CONSERVATIVE ABROAD BRANCHES CAN HELP SECURE ANOTHER CONSERVATIVE VICTORY IN 2020 – The Team, Colin Bloom, Gavin Barwell MP

Open, interactive discussion, leading to buy-in and commitment to action by conference delegates.

- Questions and observations about the issues discussed during day
- Ideas for mobilizing conservatives living abroad
- Commitment to action
- Fundraising – Team 20 and Business lunch groups
- CPF - revival

16:55 – 17:00 CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

Heather Harper

Speaker

**Heather Harper**  
*Chairman, Conservatives Abroad*



Heather was appointed Chairman of Conservatives Abroad by Lord Feldman.

She was an expat in the Arabian Gulf for over 10 years where she worked in broadcasting in the Kingdom of Bahrain for Channel 55 and early CNN reporting.

She was Chairman of Beaconsfield Constituency Conservative Association from 2008-2011 and is its Honorary Vice-President.

She set up, and is Patron of, Gulf Tories for Conservatives Abroad and is Patron of the Conservative Foundation

Heather's early career was in advertising in London, producing TV commercials.

Heather has worked in the voluntary sector for many years including Crimestoppers, Thames Valley Police, DrugFam, the Angelus Foundations, Richings Players and is President of the Ivers and Wexham Conservatives.

Growing the global constituency of Conservatives Abroad and increasing the overseas vote are her continuing challenges.



Speaker

**Lord Feldman of Elstree**  
*Chairman of the Conservative Party*



Andrew Feldman was created a life peer in 2010.

He has a degree in Jurisprudence from Brasenose College Oxford and subsequently went to the Inns of Court School of Law.

He was a management consultant with Bain & Co before being called to the bar in 1991. He worked as a commercial barrister until 1995. He subsequently joined his family fashion firm serving as Managing Director and then Chief Executive.

He was Conservative Deputy Treasurer and then Chief Executive of Conservative Campaign Headquarters playing a key role in the 2010 election campaign.

Following the 2010 general election the Prime Minister appointed him Co-Chairman of the Conservative Party. Following the success of the 2015 General Election, he was appointed Chairman of the Conservative Party.

Lord Feldman has been fundamental in supporting the growth of Conservatives Abroad.



**John Penrose MP**  
*Minister for Constitutional Reform*

John Penrose was appointed Parliamentary Secretary (Minister for Constitutional Reform) in the Cabinet Office in May 2015. He is the Member of Parliament for Weston-super-Mare.

After becoming MP for Weston Super-Mare in 2005, John became a member of the Work and Pensions Select Committee until 2009 when he became Shadow Business Minister until 2010. During this time John was also a member of the Regulatory Reform Select Committee.

From 2010 to 2012 John was Parliamentary Under Secretary at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, covering the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympic and Paralympic Games.

In 2012 John became a member of the Public Administration Select Committee, a position he occupied until 2014. John was appointed Government Whip (Junior Lord of the Treasury) in February 2014 and Assistant Whip from October 2013 to February 2014.



**Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP**

Geoffrey has been a Member of Parliament since 1992, first for Cirencester and Tewkesbury then, following boundary changes, for The Cotswolds.

He has been a Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party and Chairman of the Party's International Office. He is also Chairman of the Conservatives Friends of the Chinese. In 1995 he was appointed PPS to the Agriculture Minister, Douglas Hogg. In opposition he held a number of front bench posts including the shadow minister for Local and Devolved Government Affairs, shadow minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Investment, shadow minister for International trade and Development and a Whip

He attended the Royal Agricultural College and is a chartered surveyor. He is managing director of a farming company.



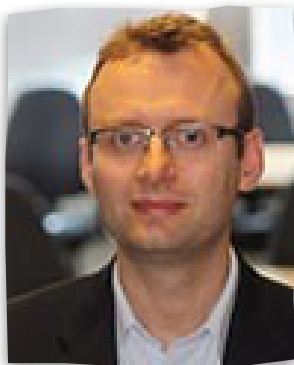
Speaker



Speaker



Speaker



### Alex Robertson

*Director of Communications, The Electoral Commission*

As Director of Communication at The Electoral Commission, Alex Robertson leads a team of 20 responsible for marketing, campaigns, public relations, brand, digital channels, internal communications and public affairs. Alex has run campaigns to help people participate in high profile events including UK Parliamentary General Elections and the Scottish Independence Referendum. He also oversees the Commission's day-to-day engagement with Parliament and the media. Before joining the Commission Alex held senior communications and policy roles for the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development and Transport for London. Alex is also a governor at High Beaches Primary School in Harpenden.

Speaker



### Lord Lexden OBE

Is the official historian to the Conservative Party and the Carlton Club. He is also Chairman of the Conservative History Group. He has consistently called —in a number of speeches, in the report of a committee in the last Parliament and in amendments to legislation - for full voting rights for British citizens living overseas.

Speaker



### Colin Bloom

*Director of Outreach, Conservative Party*

Prior to being the Director of Outreach for the Conservative Party Colin Bloom was the Chief Executive of the Conservative Christian Fellowship for the whole of the last Parliament. With more than twenty years experience in politics in both the Voluntary Party as well as being active in senior positions in Local Government, Colin has stood twice in Parliamentary elections.

Colin has had a successful career in industry before becoming Chief Executive of a large charity. For all of his adult life Colin has been closely engaged with humanitarian charities and the voluntary sector both in the UK and overseas.

### Darren Mott

*Director of Campaigns, Conservative Party*

Beginning his career in the Party over 20 years ago as a Trainee Agent, Darren Mott has spent his working career dedicated to campaigning for the Conservative Party. After spending the 2010 General Election campaign as a Battleground Director for the CCHQ Target Seats programme, he moved to take on the role of Deputy Director of Elections, managing all aspects of the Partys elections on the ground, including securing a historic victory in Newark.

Following the 2015 General Election, Darren has been appointed Director of Campaigning for the Party, in charge of all field operations and delivering campaign strategy across the country. He is co-ordinating efforts for the Police and Crime Commissioner, Local, Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliamentary elections in 2016, as well as working towards securing victory in 2020.

Speaker



### Sir Bill Cash MP

*Chairman, House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee*

Bill Cash has been a Conservative Member of Parliament since 1984 and has represented the Stone constituency since 1997.

Bill was born in London on 10 May 1940 and grew up in Sheffield. He was educated at Stonyhurst College and Lincoln College Oxford where he read History. After qualifying as a solicitor in 1967 he practised constitutional and administrative law.

In May 1984 he was elected as MP for Stafford where he remained until he was elected to the newly created constituency of Stone in 1997 being re-elected in 2001 and 2005. He was Shadow Attorney General and Shadow Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs between 2001 to 2003.

The leader of the Maastricht Rebellion during the 1990s Bill was voted Parliamentary Campaigner of the Year for 1991. He is currently Chairman of the European Scrutiny Committee and Chairman and founder of the European Foundation think tank.

Speaker





## Speaker

### Gavin Barwell MP *Comptroller of the Royal Household*



Gavin was elected as a Conservative Member of Parliament for Croydon Central in 2010. He has lived in Croydon all his life and has set up a number of volunteer projects, including a group who help to keep parks and open spaces clean, a Job Club and a group of teenagers who do regular community work to improve the town and in the process change some people's perceptions of our young people. He has won wide praise for his response to the Croydon riots (Asian Voice voted him Conservative Backbencher of the Year for 2011) and for his campaign to strengthen the law in relation to drug driving after the tragic death of his constituent Lillian Groves (The Sun named him MP of the week twice). Gavin's Private Members Bill to tackle discrimination against those with mental health conditions became law in April 2013. Gavin was the Parliamentary Private Secretary to Michael Gove until October 2013 when the Prime Minister made him a Government Whip.

Gavin was re-elected in 2015 and shortly after was promoted to Comptroller of the Royal Household, a senior position in the Government Whips' Office.

### Message to Conservatives Abroad from Rt Hon Lord Taylor of Holbeach CBE *Government Chief Whip, House of Lords*



I became Chairman of Conservatives Abroad in 2001 taking over from Robin Hodgson, now Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts. We had a number of branches at that time but there was much to be done to improve communication and to increase electoral registration. Registration was a very complex procedure and not surprisingly most of those living and working overseas were not registered.

Encouraged by the late Dick Pantlin (founder of the British School in Brussels) we persuaded the Foreign Office that their embassies and consulates could be pro-active. We also persuaded the Electoral Commission under Sam Younger that not only should the registration forms be on-line but that on-line completion would greatly increase registration. Despite this registration remains a challenge for us all.

Meanwhile I enjoyed many visits to branches, the problems of the registration of political organisations in Spain for example, and the sense of common purpose which has continued under Caroline Abel Smith from 2008 and is now flourishing under Heather Harper.



### Annual Reception and Dinner Carlton Club October 8th, 2015



We are delighted to welcome the Secretary of State for Foreign Commonwealth Affairs, Rt. Hon. Philip Hammond MP as our Guest Speaker.

The Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP was appointed Foreign Secretary on 15 July 2014. He was elected Conservative MP for Runnymede and Weybridge in 1997.

Philip was born in Epping, Essex in 1955 and attended school in Brentwood before studying politics, philosophy and economics at University College, Oxford.

He was previously Secretary of State for Transport from May 2010, when he was appointed as a Privy Counsellor. Prior to this, he held a number of shadow portfolios. He was elected to Parliament in 1997 and was appointed Secretary of State for Defence in 2011.

Philip had a business career in small and medium-sized companies in manufacturing, consultancy, property and construction, and oil and gas, both in the UK and abroad. He is married with 3 children and lives in Send, Surrey.

We are also very pleased to welcome Jonathan Aitken, a long time supporter of Conservatives Abroad who will also be speaking at our dinner.